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Emily 71

Chris

DCH file

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT**SUBJECT: Allegations of Communist Instigation of the South Korean Political Crisis**

- (1) The South Korean Home Ministry, following the riots at Masan on election day, 15 March, announced that the trouble reflected communist tactics.
- (2) On 13 April, after violence again erupted, President Rhee stated publicly, "It is suspected that the communists are behind the present riot. Such riots present the communists with a welcome opportunity."
- (3) A few days later the principal government newspaper devoted front page headlines to alleged "communist activities" in connection with the riots.
- (4) On 20 April the Pusan provincial police chief ordered a search for all persons having communist connections.
- (5) President Rhee on 19 April stated to Ambassador McConaughy that Vice President Chang Myon and other opposition political leaders were in league with unidentified "subversive ringleaders who had planned the entire movement." Four days later Rhee shifted the alleged responsibility to a "Chang Myon-directed Catholic Church conspiracy."
- (6) Ambassador Yang here in Washington in private meetings with State Department officials and in public statements had claimed that the riots were communist instigated. However, in announcing his resignation in Washington, Yang is reported to have said he had been instructed by his government "to say that there was communist involvement...but I have been informed...that there was no communist involvement...therefore, I want publicly to apologize...."

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(7) Army Chief of Staff, Lt. General Song, in a press briefing on 23 April, stated that no evidence had been found that the communists influenced the demonstrations.

(8) Communist propaganda media--particularly in North Korea--are exploiting the South Korean situation but there is no evidence in this propaganda that communist political or military action is threatened or appears imminent. The presence of United States forces in the country is criticized as the underlying cause of the instability of South Korea. The communists are demanding a reappraisal of the U. S. policy in Taiwan, South Vietnam, and Japan, where, they claim, popular indignation against "foreign oppressors" and "national traitors" is growing daily.

(9) As far as we know, no credible evidence has been received here in Washington to substantiate any claims of communist instigation or effective participation in the Korean riots. However, if the unrest continues we must expect to see the communists profiting by the opportunity this gives them.

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

HSheldon/OCI

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

1 May 1960

Robert E. Cushman
Brigadier General, USMC
Assistant to the Vice President
The Capitol

Bob:

As requested.

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Executive Officer

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Allegations of Communist Instigation of
the South Korean Political Crisis

Insofar as we know, no reliable evidence has been received here in Washington to substantiate any claims of Communist instigation or direct participation in the South Korean political crisis. However, beginning just after the riots in Masan on election day, 15 March, and continuing until shortly before Rhee's resignation last week, the South Korean government indicated that the series of disorders in the country were Communist inspired. This stand was almost certainly intended to divert attention from the spontaneous popular nature of the demonstrations.

President Rhee and his Home Ministry publicly charged the disturbances reflected Communist tactics and front page head-lines in the principal government newspaper supported this position.

On 20 April the Pusan provincial police chief ordered his subordinate units to search for all persons having Communist connections.

President Rhee in a statement to Ambassador McConaughy on 19 April implicated Vice President Chang Myon and other opposition political leaders as being in league with unidentified "subversive ringleaders" who had planned the entire movement. Four days later Rhee shifted his accusations from Communist subversion to a "Chang Myon-directed Catholic Church conspiracy" as being responsible for the unrest.

In Washington, Ambassador Yang in public statements and in private meetings with Secretary Herter and other State Department officials claimed that the riots were Communist instigated. When he announced his resignation, however, he is reported to have stated that he had acted on government instructions "to say that there was Communist involvement." He said, "...but I have been informed... that there was no Communist involvement...therefore, I want publicly to apologize..."

Communist propaganda media--particularly in North Korea--are exploiting the South Korean situation but there is no evidence in this propaganda that Communist political or military action is threatened or appears imminent. The presence of United States forces in the country is criticized as the underlying cause of the instability of

South Korea. The Communists are demanding a reappraisal of US policy in Taiwan, South Vietnam, and Japan, where popular indignation against "foreign oppressors" and "national traitors" is said to be growing daily.

ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

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Allegations of Communist
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